



**STATE OF VERMONT
Vermont Department of Education
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Vergennes Union High School Teacher Named 2011 Teacher of the Year

MONTPELIER – Jennifer Lawson, a middle school language arts and social studies teacher at Vergennes Union High School in Vergennes, was named by the State Board of Education as the 2011 Vermont Teacher of the Year at a ceremony held today at the school.

Also honored were:

- Alternate **Kathy Bennett**, a high school French teacher at Enosburg Falls Middle and High School in Enosburg Falls.
- Finalist **Maria Dana Dezotell**, a high school science teacher at Missisquoi Valley Union High School in Swanton.

As the 2011 Teacher of the Year, Lawson will travel statewide visiting schools and working with teachers. In addition, she is Vermont's candidate for the National Teacher of the Year award, sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers. She will also travel to Washington, D.C. this spring for a reception at the White House.

State Board members visited Lawson's classroom this morning prior to the school-wide assembly. The assembly included remarks by Lawson, 2010 Vermont Teacher of the Year Craig Divis, Education Commissioner Armando Vilaseca and State Board Chair Fayneese Miller. The student body and faculty were present as well. Lawson was presented with SMART Board™ equipment and software for her classroom by Brian Schofield of SMART Technologies, with software and materials going to each of the other two finalists.

Lawson, a resident of Waltham, has been an educator at VUHS for six years, and prior to that taught at Vergennes Union Elementary School. She has been a classroom teacher for 12 years. She received her Masters of Education from Connecticut College in 2002, with a B.S. in Elementary Education from UVM in 1998. She serves on the school's AYP Team for Literacy, co-leads the AYP Afterschool Program for Reading and Math, and is a teacher representative for the district-based NECAP Research and GLE Assessment Design. She has presented nationally on Expeditionary Learning Schools for Outward Bound and is the author of a national publication on alternative energy sources for schools.

"Since day one of my teaching career, I have worked diligently to create learning experiences and assignments that deliberately push students beyond their comfort zone in the hope that they discover the strength and the means to be successful, or the courage to get back on their feet and try again when faced with failure," she wrote in her application.

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Principal Peter Reynolds wrote, “A consummate teacher, Jenn’s mind is always exploring ways to increase her students’ engagement and learning. Her efforts at reaching for learning extremes put her on a level with the highest performing teachers in the country. She represents the Middle School at VUHS and the teaching profession well. More importantly, she serves her kids with all that she has.”

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